

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 8, 2005

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MARKEY LAUNCHES RARELY-USED RESOLUTION OF INQUIRY TO FORCE BUSH ADMINISTRATION TO HAND OVER PAPERS ON RENDITION

WASHINGTON, DC- According to press reports, Secretary of State, Condoleeza Rice, apparently privately admitted to the German Chancellor Angela Merkel that the United States accidentally kidnapped a German citizen and rendered him to a secret prison, today Representative Ed Markey (D-MA), author of the "Torture Outsourcing Prevention Act," introduced a Resolution of Inquiry demanding information from the Department of Defense, the State Department, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and the White House on the prisoners which have been rendered by the U.S. to facilities around the world. The Markey Resolution of Inquiry directs the relevant agencies and the President to provide certain information to the House of Representatives relating to the extraordinary rendition of certain foreign citizens.

"I am introducing this resolution because I feel very strongly that the House of Representatives has failed miserably in its oversight of the detention and rendition practices of the Bush Administration," said Rep. Markey. "Over the last two years, there has been mounting evidence that the Administration has engaged in actions which appear to be inconsistent with the obligations that the United States has under the Convention Against Torture." The Bush Administration has never formally stated how many cases of extraordinary renditions have occurred, but unofficial reports estimate the total number since 9/11 to be 100 to 150.

The resolution would direct the various Cabinet agencies with purview over aspects of the practice of rendering suspects to provide Congress with documents in their possession relating to who has been rendered.

The resolution requests documents used by the agencies on the rendering of suspects. Such documents shall include, but not be limited to— "any reports, memoranda or other documents indicating whether the government of any such country subsequently tortured

or subjected to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment any person rendered, transferred, or returned to that country by the United States Government.”

After numerous requests for this information from the Department of Defense the Department of State and the Department of Justice, Rep. Markey resorted to the seldom-used Resolution of Inquiry to obtain information about the practice of sending prisoners overseas. In the past, the procedure was used during the Vietnam War in an attempt to obtain the Pentagon papers, it was successfully used to get information about Billy Carter’s involvement with the Libyan government. Under House Rules, Resolutions of Inquiry are privileged resolutions. If the Committees to which they are referred fail to take action on them within 14 legislative days, a motion can be offered to discharge them from further consideration and bringing them directly to the House floor.

“The U.S. Congress should not have to infer from the news reports of diplomatic whispers to foreign ministers what our policy on sending prisoners overseas is. This Administration has not been forthright about the practice of rendition and has not fully disclosed information on all of those who might have been subjected to this practice, and who might as a result ended up in a country where they were subjected to torture or other mistreatment. We simply don’t know whether these cases represent the tip of the iceberg, or whether they are the iceberg; that is, whether they represent all of the problematic cases,” said Rep. Markey.

Secretary Rice’s remarks in the Ukraine suggest a shift in U.S. policy on the treatment of detainees in U.S. custody. The Secretary indicated that the policy of the U.S. was not to allow its personnel, whether on American or foreign soil to engage in cruel and unusual punishment but her remarks neglected to address the rules applying to U.S. prisoners held by foreign governments.

Please see <http://www.house.gov/markey/> for more information on Rep. Markey’s work to end the practice of outsourcing torture.